



Kansas Secretary of State Ron Thornburgh

Canvassing Kansas

An update on election news in Kansas

December 1997

Third MEOC enjoyable and valuable

The third Midwest Election Officials Conference was held Dec. 7-10, 1997, at the Hyatt Regency Crown Center in Kansas City, Mo. The event was hosted by the Secretaries of State in the four-state area: Paul Pate, Iowa; Ron Thornburgh, Kansas; Rebecca (Bekki) McDowell Cook, Missouri; and Scott Moore, Nebraska. The first two MEOCs were held in Kansas City in December 1989 and December 1991.

Approximately 225 county election officers and their employees attended the 1997 MEOC, in

addition to approximately 10 speakers. Kansas was the leading state in attendance with 82 county election officers and staff registered at MEOC. Some county election officers doubled as speakers in breakout sessions. There were approximately 20 staff members from the four Secretary of State offices attending and helping run the conference.

Participants heard the following presentations:

- *Looking Under Rocks*—Ideas for recruiting, training and keeping good election board workers, presented by county election officers.
- *Managing Your Media Message*—How to benefit from your dealings with the media—presented by representatives of the radio, print and TV media.
- *Swimming with Sharks*—How to carry out your duties and minimize the risk of legal entanglements, lawsuits and court challenges, presented by prosecutors and staff from area Attorney General offices.
- *Houston, We Have a Problem*—A summary of the latest in election technology—what's available, what's on the horizon, and how to deal with electronic glitches. Seminar conducted by Penelope Bonsall of the Federal Election Center and Doug Lewis of The Election Center.
- *Selling Democracy*—Ideas for

**THIS IS YOUR DELAYED
ISSUE OF CANVASSING
KANSAS!**

The newsletter is usually scheduled for distribution early in March, June, September and December. This issue was delayed to include the wrap-up of the Midwest Election Officials Conference.

improving your voter outreach program, presented by county election officers from the four-state area who have had proven results, including Connie Schmidt, election commissioner in Johnson County, Kansas.

- *It's in the Mail*—Strategies provided by U.S. Postal Service employees on how to use postal regulations to your advantage and how to improve efficiency of mailings to cut costs.
- *Smooth Sailing in the Office Ocean*—How to increase office efficiency and save time and money. Presented by county election officers in the four-state area, including Pam Meadows of Edwards County, Kansas.
- *Stressed Out*—Survival strategies for avoiding, minimizing or just coping with stress, presented by Dr. Edward Hunter, a psychologist at the University of Kansas Medical Center.

Canvassing Kansas IN THIS ISSUE

<i>Change in NVRA confirmation mailing procedure.....</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>A note from the Secretary.....</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>Year 2000 problem—ruin or ruse?.....</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Electronic reporting to be advanced in 1998.....</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Reminders.....</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Voter registration increases in 1997 as expected.....</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>New county clerks in Smith and Scott county.....</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Volunteer claims money at fair.....</i>	<i>6</i>

Continued on page 4

Change in NVRA confirmation mailing procedure

The Secretary of State's office has received information from the Federal Election Commission indicating a change in the way county election officers may initiate purge procedures on certain registered voters after sending confirmation mailings. This new information will make it easier to purge some inactive voters' names in certain situations.

The National Voter Registration Act (NVRA) requires the state to conduct a systematic registration list maintenance program. The program in use in Kansas is the U.S. Postal Service's National Change of Address (NCOA) program.

The NVRA "Guide for County Election Officers," supplied by the Secretary of State's office in February 1996, contains instructions for dealing with apparent changes of address. To review the process, please note:

1 CEOs are instructed to mail a confirmation notice to a voter any time the CEO receives evidence of an address change *from a source other than the voter*. Such evidence includes: election-related mail returned by the post office, information from the NCOA, or possibly a different address listed by a voter on a petition or other document.

2 The confirmation notice is a first-class, forwardable mail piece with return postage paid sent when there is evidence of an address change. Many CEOs have signed on to use the Secretary of State's business reply permit to save the annual application fee. If the voter returns the confirmation

notice, the CEO simply finalizes the appropriate change in the registration records and files the paperwork. No other action is required. Under the NVRA and state law, if the voter fails to return the confirmation notice sent in response to an apparent *out-of-county address change* and subsequently misses two general elections, the CEO could remove the voter's name from the registration list.

3 If the evidence indicates an apparent *address change within the county*, the CEO changes the voter's registration record before sending the notice. If the voter returns the notice, the change is confirmed and therefore final. If the voter does not return the notice, the CEO is not instructed to remove the voter's name. In effect, you never initiate purge procedures unless the evidence indicates a move out of the county.

It had been our understanding that purge proceedings could only be initiated after a confirmation notice was mailed due to evidence that the voter had moved *out of county*, and not in cases where a confirmation notice was mailed because the post office returned some other mailing as "undeliverable" or "forwarding order expired."

What has changed?

Now we have been told that the purge procedure (confirmation notice/no response/wait two elections/purge) can be initiated when:

- the CEO receives evidence of an address change, *either in-county or out-of-county*, or
- the post office returns a mailing as undeliverable or forwarding order expired.

In effect, the CEO presumes the voter moved out of the county. If that

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proves not to be the case and the voter shows up at the next election, the voter can reregister and vote a provisional ballot.

A further change in our understanding of the confirmation notice and purge rules is that the U.S. Justice Department has approved the "no contact" purge. This means that if a voter has not voted or had any contact with the election office for three years, the CEO may initiate the process of mailing a confirmation notice and purging if the notice is returned undeliverable or if the voter receives it, fails to respond and misses the next two general elections.



RON THORNBURGH
SECRETARY OF STATE

Dear Friends:

December has been a busy month for the secretary of state's office! In addition to traditional holiday activities and year end work, many employees have put in hundreds of hours coordinating the Midwest Election Officials Conference, the Election Consolidation Task Force meeting and preparing for the upcoming legislative session.

While many of you enjoyed MEOC, you may not be aware of all the planning that took place to coordinate the event. Although we were working with three other states, Kansas had special responsibilities because of our close proximity to Kansas City. I would like to publicly thank several staff members who made the 1997 MEOC possible: Brad Bryant, Nancy Bryant, Janet Chubb, Tammy Dishman, Randy Foster, Kevin Gaskin, Teresa Keating, Jan Sachs and Raylene Wallace. Based on the feedback we have received, the conference was an overwhelming success in large part due to their efforts and those of staff in Iowa, Nebraska and Missouri.

A few days after MEOC, our office began preparing for the first meeting of the Election Consolidation Task Force. The Task Force is looking at whether or not Kansas has too many opportunities for elections. Currently, there are more than 3,000 government entities with the authority to call a special election. I believe we may be able to save money, decrease voter confusion and fatigue and increase turnout if there are specific dates throughout the year on which an election may be called.

The Task Force met at Wichita State University, Wednesday, December 17, and discussed the benefits and potential obstacles to election consolidation. It was agreed that the issue deserves further study, and the Task Force will meet again sometime in February. Following that meeting, we will hold several public forums throughout the state to seek input from citizens and representatives of local government. (We will be working with county election officers to coordinate many of these meetings.) The Task Force comprises representatives from state and local government, the Kansas Legislature, Kansas media, Kansas educators, county election officials and the general public. The Task Force hopes to complete its work by summer 1998.

It's hard to believe another year has come and gone. We enjoyed our association with you in 1997 and wish you all the best this holiday season and throughout the new year.


RON THORNBURGH
Secretary of State

General sessions and lunches featured the following speakers: Nancy Stewart of the U.S. Justice Department speaking on election fraud; Professors Noel Pugach and Ted Kachel portraying Harry Truman and Winston Churchill.

The banquet on Tuesday night featured a hilarious routine by Mark Mayfield followed by the keynote speech by Bill Grigsby, longtime sports announcer and member of the Kansas City Chiefs' radio broadcast team. Grigsby's speech was filled with humor, anecdotes from his long career in sports and an underlying message recognizing the importance of election officials in supporting the democratic system we all enjoy in this country.

The final general session on Wednesday morning featured a humorous and inspirational message from Suzie Humphreys of Dallas, Texas.

Nine companies operated vendor exhibit booths to give participants an opportunity to see their latest offerings:

MEOC hosts would like to thank the following companies for their support of the conference:

- Hoechst Marion Roussel, Inc. of Kansas City, Missouri
- Syntetics Corporation of Wakefield, Massachusetts
- Greater Kansas City Election Officers
- Dunn & Bradstreet Information of Bethlehem, Pennsylvania
- West Publishing Company of Eagan, Minnesota
- Missouri Press Services, Inc.
- Nebraska Press Advertising Service
- Missouri AFL-CIO
- Nebraska AFL-CIO
- Missouri National Education Association
- Nebraska Education Association
- Lockwood Company of Atchison, Kansas
- Nebraska Bankers Association
- McCallie Associates Inc. of Bellevue, Nebraska

- Election Systems and Software of Omaha, Nebraska (formerly American Information Systems)
- Global Election Systems, Inc. of Overland Park, Kansas
- Douglas Election Equipment of Crete, Nebraska
- Election Data Services, Inc. of Washington, D.C.
- Fidler & Chambers Company of Davenport, Iowa
- MicroVote Corporation of Indianapolis, Indiana
- Sequoia Pacific of Jamestown, New York
- Unisys Corporation of Sacramento, California
- Cover One of Dallas, Texas

The weather didn't always cooperate during the conference; heavy snowfall Sunday and

Monday kept some participants from reaching the hotel on time and even forced a few cancellations, but most of those who managed to be there reported the conference was enjoyable and valuable.

There is no definite schedule for future MEOCs, but if and when they are planned, an invitation will go out to every county election officer. The goal of this and other MEOCs has been to bring a national-quality election conference to the region, enabling some people to attend who might lack the time or travel budget to go to other conferences of this type.

Year 2000 problem--ruin or ruse?

There is trouble brewing in the not so distant future. The trouble has to do with the way computers use dates. Simply put, it boils down to two digits.

Dates in computer programs had a standard date format of DD/MM/YY (where DD=day, MM = month and YY equals the last two digits of the year). In 1999, January 1 will be written as 01/01/99 and in 2000, January 1 will be written as 01/01/00. Your computer system won't "know" what century it is.

How did this happen? The date programming convention was developed when computers had very small memory capacity and even the memory saved by using two digits was very significant. Also, computer programmers never thought the applications they were writing years ago would still be in use today.

The impact on businesses, services and institutions that don't meet the century-rollover deadline is unpredictable and incalculable. There are thousands of clock-dependent electronics used for financial services, insurance, retailing, building and plant management; and every operation will have to analyze and fix the problem.

Opinions vary greatly on the impact of the Year 2000. Some experts think that the entire millennium problem has been overblown, while others are predicting near apocalyptic consequences. Logically enough, the very people who seem to be screaming the loudest are those that have created a cottage industry of selling solutions for the problem.

How will the Year 2000 problem affect you? Discuss the issue with your data processing people or your consultant or vendor who handles your computer programming needs.

Electronic reporting to be advanced in 1998

We have discussed in this newsletter for the past couple of years our plan to gradually increase the capability to exchange information with county election officers. In the past year we have had several counties send their central voter registration to our computer via the Internet. This summer and fall we have established e-mail connections with 25 CEOs

Now we're working toward the next step: election night tabulation.

who already had Internet access, and we've conducted tests of those CEOs'

ability to access a computer version of the NVRA county report form and make reports via the Internet.

We invite all CEOs who have Internet access to make their official NVRA report in January electronically; just call us and we'll tell you the Internet address where you can find the form. You'll see that it looks just like the regular paper version of the NVRA report form that everyone's familiar with.

Now we're working toward the next step: election night tabulation. We plan to design an electronic form showing the 1998 primary and general election races, parties and candidates. Any CEO could dial up the address from their computer and enter vote totals when convenient. We'll be conducting a test of this electronic election night tabulation in the next few months, and if everything works we'll have a couple dozen CEOs reporting unofficial election-night vote totals by computer and saving phone calls and faxes.

So far this has been accomplished in-house with existing personnel and resources. It will be interesting to see how far we can take it without spending money. Watch this newsletter and other communications from our office for updates. If you want to hear more about it or sign up to participate, give us a call.

SOS web server site

Our web server site for electronic reporting is <http://165.201.68.87>

County election officers with Internet access who wish to make their NVRA reports electronically may visit this site for instructions. See "Reminders" on this page.



REMINDERS

Remember these important dates when county election officers are to report to the Secretary of State:

✓ The next central voter registration file is due **as soon as possible after January 1, 1998, and no later than January 15** (see K.A.R. 7-23-13). If you have Internet capability, you may arrange to send your file electronically. Just contact the elections division at (785) 296-4561 or data processing at (785) 296-6271 if you're interested.

✓ The next NVRA report is due **as soon as possible after January 1, 1998, and not later than January 15** (see K.A.R. 7-38-1(b) and (c)). As mentioned above, if you have Internet capability, you may arrange to make your report electronically. Just call one of the numbers listed above or visit our web server site and we'll tell you how to access the electronic version of the NVRA report form, and you'll be on your way!

✓ *Corporate hog and dairy farming election results must be reported...* There has been quite a bit of electoral activity the past couple of years on corporate farming, especially hog farming. A number of counties, particularly in western Kansas, have established corporate farming either through county commissioner resolution or the petition/election process. Some have also rescinded it, which usually involves a petition and election. According to K.S.A. 17-5908(c) and (d), the county election officer must report the results of such elections to the Secretary of State for publication in the *Kansas Register*. There are people who ask to see the results, and we have discovered some of the results have not been reported. If you have had a corporate farming election and have not reported, please do so as soon as possible. If you're unsure whether you've reported, give us a call and we'll get you up to date.

Voter registration increases in 1997 as expected

The voter registration figures have been compiled based on the numbers certified by the county election officers to the Secretary of State as of August 1, 1997. These figures will be in use for most of next year's election season until new numbers are certified in late July 1998. The current figures are the basis for computing candidate petition requirements for 1998. The following table compares the August 1, 1997, totals to the figures that were in effect for the general election in November 1996.

1996 was a presidential election year, which has historically produced higher voter registration levels than other election years. In

VOTER REGISTRATION				
	1996	%	1997	%
Total registered voters	1,436,418	--	1,454,314	--
Democrats	423,595	29	424,925	29
Republicans	650,566	45	651,548	45
Libertarians	9,829	0.6	9,703	0.6
Reform	936	0.06	1,196	0.08
Unaffiliated	351,492	24	366,942	25

the past, the off-year levels have been lower than election years due to purges, changes of address and other factors. With the advent of the state motor-voter program in 1994 and the National Voter Registration Act in 1996 in Kansas, registration

levels were expected to rise due to the increased voter registration opportunities; and purging was more limited, leading to an expectation of overall increased registration levels, which the above figures bear out.

New county clerks in Smith and Scott counties

Lela Rogers is the new County Clerk in Smith County. She started working in the clerk's office in March 1996. Prior to that she worked for 21 years at the Scribner-Boogaarts warehouse. Lela and her husband Jim, a meat inspector for the Federal USDA, also ran a small grocery store for seven years. They have one son, Mike, a school teacher in Smith Center, who is married to a school teacher. Mike and his wife have two boys, six and two years old, and another child is due in February. Lela says when she is not playing with the grandchildren she enjoys walking and working on crafts. Lela succeeds **Teri Van Wey** who now works for Kansas State University in Salina.

December 29, 1997, will be the first day on the job for recently appointed Scott County Clerk **Pamela J. Faurot**. Pam has been the financial secretary at Scott City High School for the last nine years. Before starting at the high school she worked for Kennedy and Coe accounting firm. Pam's husband, Darrel, is a carpenter and house builder. They have two sons, Brent and Kevin. Brent and his wife Angie have a 16-month-old daughter named Kristy. Kevin is a freshman at Scott City High School. When she's not working, Pam can be found fishing, doing yard work or watching the Colorado Rockies play baseball.

Volunteer claims money at state fair

The Secretary of State's office, with additional staff from various counties, participated in the 1997 Kansas State Fair in Hutchinson. Held Sept. 5-14, 1997, the state fair entertained 357,742 people.

The Secretary of State, along with many other state agencies, provided useful information to fairgoers. In fact, a volunteer from the Shawnee County Election Office, Mary Jane Fleenor, was able to claim money from the State Treasurer's booth for her granddaughter. The money was claimed through the unclaimed property program.

As many of you know, this was our eleventh year at the state fair. We are looking forward to seeing you there next year as well.